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Amendment

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REMARKS

The Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration of the application.

Claims 1 – 29 were pending in the present application. Claims 1 – 4, 11, 13 – 19, and 21 – 23 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Bhaskar (EP 1292117A1). Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bhaskar in view of Sekiya et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,610,637). Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bhaskar in view of Hermanson (U.S. Patent No. 5,581,284). Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bhaskar in view of Sekiya et al. Claims 24 – 29 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bhaskar in view of Neese et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,302,511). Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bhaskar in view of Neese and further in view of Sekiya et al.

Claims 7 – 10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were deemed allowable by the Examiner if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 – 6 and 11 – 29 are canceled with this amendment; the Applicants reserving the right to further pursue the subject matter of the canceled claims in a continuation application. Claims 7, 8, and 9 are amended to include the limitations of the base claims from which they depend, and any intervening claims; claim 10 depends from amended claim 9.

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The Applicant thus believes that the claims remaining in the application are in condition for allowance, and favorable action by the Examiner is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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